

## SEGREGATED LETTERSHIFTS

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Friends, are you fascinated, as so many imaginative people are, by the possibilities inherent in lettershifting, but find that you're reluctant to actually *perform* this radical, word-altering operation? And do you hesitate mainly because what you almost always end up with, using a traditional lettershift kit, is some grotesque, unpronounceable string of consonants, with perhaps an occasional vowel tossed in as a teaser? If so, then why not consider switching to vowel-friendly **segregated lettershifting**, nature's own simple design for productive lettershifting?

"Segregated," you say, "I don't know..." But wait! Consider that word, for a moment, apart from its negative associations. Segregation is, after all, one of nature's fundamental organizing principles. Birds of a feather, it is truly said, flock together, and indeed in the natural world we do *not* see flickers flocking with flamingos, horses herding with hippos (except etymologically) or skates schooling with sculpins. Everywhere one looks in nature, segregation by kind is the rule, not the exception. Why then should that same rule not also apply to alphabet-based letter-play? It is not nature's fault, after all, that bumbling humans have jumbled vowels and consonants together higgledy-piggledy in the ordering of their alphabets. Surely any alphabet ordered on a *rational* basis would, at the very least, segregate vowels from consonants.

And that is *precisely* the way in which segregated lettershifting improves upon traditional lettershifting. In segregated lettershifting, vowels shift only to other vowels, and consonants shift only to other consonants—what could be more natural? In fact, who is to say that *that* is not the way that nature always *intended* for lettershifting to be done? Certainly not segregated lettershifting's uncounted *numbers* of satisfied users!

The great advantage of segregated lettershifting, as you have no doubt discerned, is that it preserves the vowel-consonant sequence of the original word. Thus, if the original word's vowel-consonant sequence is C-V-C-V-C, say, then such will be the vowel-consonant sequence of *all* of its segregated lettershifts. And should a bit of variety be desired, there is also normal segregated lettershifting's complementary process, *reverse* segregated lettershifting, in which vowels shift only to consonants and consonants shift only to vowels. (Thus a C-V-C-V-C word, say, will be transformed by a reverse segregated lettershift into a V-C-V-C-V word.) Good luck getting your tatty, old-fashioned, consonant-choked traditional lettershift "tube" to give you reliably formful, word-like and shiftgram-rich lettershifts like *these* in any decent quantity any time soon!

As an inducement to readers to give this amazing new lettershift method a try, we present on the next page free sample portions of both the standard normal segregated lettershift field and the standard reverse segregated lettershift field. (Non-standard fields derived from custom-ordered alphabets will work just as well as the standard fields with this method, so long as vowels and consonants always shift separately.) With these two fields to work with, you will actually need nothing more, incredible as it may seem, than some writing materials, a ruler, and a few spare words in need of a makeover to begin *at once* to experience the marvels of convenient, fun, easy, organic and natural **segregated lettershifting**!

	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	E	I	O	U
001	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	E	I	O	U	A
002	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	I	O	U	A	E
003	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	O	U	A	E	I
004	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	U	A	E	I	O
005	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	A	E	I	O	U
006	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	E	I	O	U	A
007	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	I	O	U	A	E
008	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	O	U	A	E	I
009	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	U	A	E	I	O
010	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	A	E	I	O	U
011	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	E	I	O	U	A
012	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	I	O	U	A	E
013	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	O	U	A	E	I
104	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	U	A	E	I	O
015	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	A	E	I	O	U
016	V	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	E	I	O	U	A
017	W	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	I	O	U	A	E
018	X	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	O	U	A	E	I
019	Y	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	U	A	E	I	O
020	Z	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	A	E	I	O	U
021	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	E	I	O	U	A

One fifth of the full standard normal segregated lettershift field

	B	C	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Y	Z	A	E	I	O	U
001	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	B	C	D	F	G
002	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	C	D	F	G	H
003	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	D	F	G	H	J
004	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	F	G	H	J	K
005	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	G	H	J	K	L
006	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	H	J	K	L	M
007	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	J	K	L	M	N
008	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	K	L	M	N	P
009	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	L	M	N	P	Q
010	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	M	N	P	Q	R
011	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	N	P	Q	R	S
012	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	P	Q	R	S	T
013	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	Q	R	S	T	V
014	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	R	S	T	V	W
015	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	S	T	V	W	X
016	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	T	V	W	X	Y
017	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	V	W	X	Y	Z
018	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	W	X	Y	Z	B
019	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	X	Y	Z	B	C
020	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	Y	Z	B	C	D
021	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	E	I	O	U	A	Z	B	C	D	F

One fifth of the full standard reverse segregated lettershift field

## A mechanical segregated lettershift generator

The one drawback to the foregoing paper-and-pencil approach to segregated lettershifting is that it is not especially speedy. A cybernetic version that ran as either a computer programs or a smartphone app would, of course, yield much quicker results: One would simply enter a word or phrase, click on a button, and be presented (in nearly every case) with a list of 104 different normal or reverse segregated lettershifts. (Why 104? Because the 21 consonants must cycle five times, once for each of the five vowels, in order to completely express the set of segregated lettershifts that is generated by any given letter string which includes at least one consonant and one vowel. The 105<sup>th</sup> member of the set is the original letter string.)

But unless and until someone actually develops and markets (or offers as freeware) such a cyber version of a segregated lettershift generator, the only alternative to the paper-and-pencil method would seem to be to try to construct a mechanical version of one along the lines of the mechanical traditional lettershift calculator described by Dave Morice in his book *Alphabet Avenue*. I have not attempted to build such a device myself, but I can see no theoretical impediment to someone's doing so, beyond the unavoidable tediousness of the task.

Start with a regular cylinder about 8" in diameter and about 8" long made of some fairly stiff material—a plastic bucket, say, or one of those metal mesh wastebaskets, or perhaps a plastic foam form of the sort sold by some craft stores. It will be necessary to mark the outside circumference of the cylinder with pen or pencil, so permanently cover this area with a sheet of markable paper if it needs it. Now comes the hard part: carefully measuring the circumference of the cylinder, by some means contrive to divide it into 105 equal segments, marking the divisions between the segments along one edge of the cylinder. That done, extend these dividing marks to the other end of the cylinder with a series of parallel lines drawn on it. Along one or both edges of the cylinder, number the segments thus defined from 0 to 104.

Next, from a roll of giftwrap or other paper cut a piece of paper about 6" wide and long enough (about 25") to wrap completely around the cylinder with a bit of overlap. Down the length of the white side of the paper, rule a series of 106 parallel that are as far apart as the lines drawn on the cylinder. Across these, rule 17 perpendicular lines about ¼" apart. You should now have a rectangular grid of 16 columns and 105 rows. Starting at the top, fill in half of the columns with five iterations each of the 21 consonants and the other half with 21 iterations each of the five vowels, all in alphabetical order. Separate the columns from one another with scissors and trim any excess paper, leaving a ½" margin for taping at one end. Now wrap each column around the cylinder and tape its ends together with clear tape; the resulting loop should fit on the cylinder loosely enough to be easily slid on and off.

Now at last you are ready to operate your mechanical lettershifter, than which nothing should be simpler. To shift the word "cat," for example, first slip a consonant loop onto the cylinder, putting any "C" in the cylinder's "0" position. Then place a vowel loop to its right with any "A" in the "0" position, and to *its* right another consonant loop with any "T" in the "0" position. Now you can simply read off "cat's" 104 different normal segregated lettershifts around the circumference of the cylinder. For reverse segregated lettershifts, just substitute vowel loops for consonant loops, and vice versa, in this procedure.